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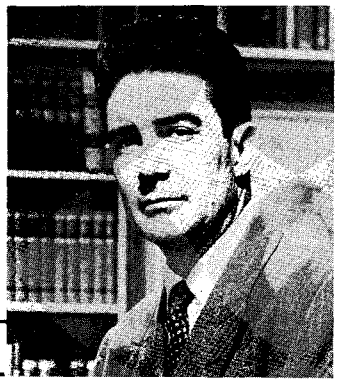

DAN SMOOT

THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Ninety miles south of Florida is the island of Cuba, about 650 miles long, east to west, about 100 miles wide, north to south. East of Cuba, across a narrow strait called the Windward Passage, is the island of Hispaniola. East of Hispaniola, across a strait called the Mona Passage, is the island of Puerto Rico. These three key islands, discovered by Columbus, separate the Atlantic Ocean from the Caribbean Sea.

The middle island—Hispaniola—was the original base of Spanish operations in the new world. Spaniards founded Santo Domingo, at the mouth of the Ozama River, on the southeastern shore of Hispaniola—the first permanent settlement of Europeans in the Americas. Though Columbus died in Spain, his remains are buried in Santo Domingo, as he had requested.

Native Indians whom Columbus discovered on Hispaniola were nearly exterminated by white men's diseases and by hard labor imposed on them. They were replaced by negro slaves imported from Africa.

About a century after Spaniards founded Santo Domingo, freebooters, buccaneers, and pirates began to form a settlement on the northwestern tip of the island. They came under the protection of France; and in 1697, Spain conceded the western third of the island as French territory. The French called their part of the island Sainte Dominique. The Spanish colony was known as Santo Domingo, after the name of the original city.

In 1795, Spain surrendered the entire island of Hispaniola to France; but the French never occupied the Spanish part of the island. A slave rebellion in the French colony exterminated or drove out whites, and resulted in establishment of the negro nation of Haiti on the western third of the island.

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Haitians invaded and occupied Santo Domingo. Napoleon sent an army which defeated Haitian invaders; but disease, continued slave uprisings, and war in Europe soon compelled the French army to withdraw.

With the help of England, Spain recaptured her old colony of Santo Domingo in 1809 and held it until 1821, when Dominicans revolted and declared independence from Spain. Within three months, Haitians again invaded Santo Domingo. They occupied it for 22 years.

In 1844, Dominicans successfully revolted against Haitian rule and proclaimed the Dominican Republic an independent nation. Power struggles among leaders and factions in the new nation; continued domestic rebellions; and repeated invasion attempts by Haiti brought misery for the next 17 years. In 1861, the Dominican president (General Pedro Santana) proclaimed the nation re-annexed to Spain.

In 1865, Dominicans again revolted, threw off Spanish control, and re-established the Dominican Republic. Again, they were unable to maintain freedom and independence.

In 1869, the Dominican president asked that his country be annexed to the United States. President Ulysses S. Grant wanted annexation, but the U. S. Senate would not approve.

Anarchy prevailed until 1882, when a strong dictator gained control. He ruled until his assassination in 1899. During the next six years, four major revolutions occurred. The nation sank so deeply in debt that foreign creditors (particularly French and Italian) were threatening force to effect collections. An American financial syndicate was also heavily involved.

In 1905, the United States assumed control of collecting Dominican customs duties and, in return, guaranteed Dominican territorial integrity. The U. S. allocated to the Dominican government 45% of duties collected. This created financial stability, because it gave the government more income than previously when most customs revenue was siphoned off by graft and corruption.[16]

Political turmoil continued, however; and in 1916, the United States sent Marines to protect American lives and property and to establish order.

The Marines confiscated and dumped into the sea approximately 3,000,000 small firearms (more than the total number of people in the country).[1] They built sewage and water systems, roads and schools. They armed and trained a native constabulary.[16]

Rafael Trujillo was a young lieutenant in the nondescript Dominican army when the U. S. Marines arrived in 1916. He served with the Marines, and developed a passionate loyalty and admiration for them. The Marines, in turn, trained Trujillo and a few other young officers to take command of a new Dominican army.[1,16]

The U. S. Marines withdrew in 1924, and Horacio Vasquez was elected President of the Dominican Republic. Before his four-year term ended, Vasquez autocratically extended it to a six-year term, giving indications that he would never willingly relinquish power. In 1930, Rafael Trujillo (who had become Chief of Staff of the American-trained Dominican army) led a revolt which overthrew Vasquez. Trujillo was elected President.[16]

In 1934, Trujillo was re-elected President for a second four-year term. In 1938, he chose not to run; but the political party which he had founded won the election; and Trujillo retained control, while serving four years as special ambassador of the Dominican Republic.

United States receivership of Dominican customs duties, begun in 1905, continued until 1941.

A new Dominican constitution of 1942 extended the presidential term to five years. Without significant opposition, Trujillo was elected in 1942 and 1947. In 1952, he decided not to run again for elective office; but, through his political-military machine, he remained virtual dictator until his death in 1961, permitting only members

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of his family or other chosen candidates to run for major offices.

The Trujillo Era: 1930-1961

Trujillo had hardly taken office for his first term as President in 1930 when a terrible hurricane struck the island, devastating the capital. Trujillo rebuilt Santo Domingo and renamed it Ciudad Trujillo (its original name being restored after his assassination).

Throughout the Trujillo era, the Dominican Republic operated on a balanced budget. The foreign debt was paid off in 1947, the national debt in 1953. When Trujillo became President in 1930, only 50,000 students were enrolled in the nation's schools. In 1956, total school enrollment was close to half a million. Great tracts of land were brought into production by irrigation. Industries were built to process native agricultural products. Foreign trade flourished.[16]

Always loyal to the United States, Trujillo saw to it that the Dominican Republic was among the first Latin American nations to join the U. S. in World War II. He offered land for settlement by refugees from European persecution.[16]

Here is a brief summary of Dominican history taken from *Trujillo: The Last Caesar*, written by General Arturo Espaillat, who held high offices during the Trujillo dictatorship, but left his homeland as an exile after Trujillo was assassinated:

"Dominican politics . . . . is a claw and fang struggle for survival. Trujillo was able to survive for 31 years only because he was almost perfectly adapted to, and shaped by, that environment . . . .

"For centuries, Dominicans have referred to their country as 'The land Columbus loved best.' But Dominicans also had reason to fear that theirs was the land that God must love least. Our whole history is one of foreign invasions and domestic insurrections . . . .

"From this chaos there emerged regional chiefs, known as *caciques*. These were very tough individuals who had clawed their way to local leadership and held it until someone a bit tougher came along . . . . Dominican politics consisted of several caciques periodically getting together to overthrow the government . . . . [which] was never strong enough to resist the caciques. The army was merely a handful of ill-trained conscripts. Recruitment was simple. From time to time the government would call on loyal caciques for volunteers. The local chiefs would then round up a batch of unhappy youths and send them to the capital. Sometimes it was necessary to use force. One cacique handcuffed his 'volunteers' to a huge rope and sent them to the army with this message: 'Here are your volunteers. Please return the rope.'

"But the U. S. Marines and Trujillo changed all that . . . .

"Trujillo always thought of himself as basically a Marine Corps officer—and 'damned proud of it.' It was typical, for instance, that of the 40 to 50 decorations conferred upon him during his long career, Trujillo was proudest of a faded, threadbare medal attesting to his service with the Marines.

"This loyalty to the Corps was responsible for his unwavering loyalty to the United States. This was true even in the face of Washington's rebuffs and attempts to topple him. Trujillo never got over his love affair with the Marines.

"The Marines pulled out in 1924. Behind them they left . . . [a] small but efficient army and a network of roads. The roads penetrated to the formerly isolated regions ruled by the caciques. And the new Marine-trained army had become more than a match for the caciques' *pistoleros*....

"Trujillo crushed the caciques. Moving his Marine-trained troops over Marine-built roads, the Generalissimo struck again and again. Caciques who wouldn't surrender unconditionally were gunned down. The survivors saw the light. The era of regional warlords was ended. The Era of Trujillo had begun.

"For his own reasons, Trujillo then precipitated a social revolution. He was not of the aristocracy. He feared and resented the old families, a feeling that most of them heartily reciprocated. So Trujillo addressed himself directly to the *campesinos*, the peasants. The power of

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the caciques is broken, he told them, and you are now under the protection of my government. Thousands of letters were sent out urging the peasants to submit their complaints directly to Trujillo. Were they abused by the landowners? Tell Trujillo. Did a village need a schoolhouse? Ask Trujillo . . . .

"And it worked. The masses remained loyal to Trujillo to the end. When he was buried, tens of thousands of grief-stricken campesinos poured out of the hills to attend his funeral . . . . No member of the educated classes ever dared attempt to lead a popular revolution. No colonel ever dared order his troops to march on the National Palace. His own men would have mowed him down. That is why the men who finally assassinated Trujillo were all from the upper ranks of Dominican society, and even they dared to act only in concert with agents of the U. S. government.

"Trujillo's political tactics also produced another social transformation: the appearance of a middle class. In 1930 there were only three really wealthy families in the Dominican Republic — the Vicinis, Ricarts and Espaillats — plus another fifty landed families of moderate wealth. Below them were only the masses. There was nothing in between.

"There were several reasons for the absence of a middle class. One was that the ever-recurring revolutions ruined agriculture, the country's only major source of income. Harvests rotted while field hands shot at each other in opposing armies. Not enough wealth could be generated to produce any real business or businessmen.

"What few merchants there were made it a point to live from hand to mouth. They kept very little merchandise in stock. And they had good reason, for anything of value in the stores was invariably confiscated by one or another of the rebel armies which made their annual appearance.

"Trujillo's iron-fisted dictatorship changed all that. He shot people who disturbed the peace. And with peace, the republic's natural wealth burst forth. Agricultural production soared. A commercial and professional class came into being. The population of the Dominican Republic nearly tripled in the Era of Trujillo.

"The price was freedom. Trujillo imposed a military discipline which turned the population into an army. The Dominican government was commanded with the same military efficiency that Trujillo had so admired in the Marines. For the first time, and possibly the last, public employees went to work on time. Official functions were conducted on a precise schedule. Offenses were punished in the same spirit of a commanding officer meting out disciplinary action. And anti-Trujillo activity, to the Old Man, was the same as a soldier committing mutiny."[1]

Exit Trujillo

Though he imposed a national socialist dictatorship on the Dominican Republic, Trujillo was a fierce enemy of that brand of international socialism called communism.

In his latter days, Trujillo felt that the U. S. State Department began to turn against him when he warned the Department that Fidel Castro was a dangerous communist. The State Department made it possible for Castro to sieze power in Cuba in 1958-1959. Destruction of Trujillo became a primary Castro objective. A remarkable chain of events indicates that the U. S. government helped accomplish that communist objective.

In July, 1960, the Peruvian government suggested a meeting of the Organization of American States (O.A.S. — composed of the U. S. and 20 Latin American nations) to discuss the Soviet threat in this hemisphere, particularly Soviet control of Castro in Cuba.[2] The O. A. S. committee appointed to arrange the conference was primarily concerned, however, with making arrangements acceptable to Castro. The committee decided to placate Castro by setting a conference whose first order of business would be, not communist control of Cuba, but charges against Trujillo. The Venezuelan government had accused Trujillo of plotting to assassinate President Romulo Betancourt,[3] a former communist[4] who, like other communists, hated Trujillo.

The U. S. State Department supported the committee plan. When the O. A. S. conference met

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at San Jose, Costa Rica, on August 16, 1960, Eisenhower's Secretary of State took the lead in getting a resolution recommending that O. A. S. nations break diplomatic relations with the Dominican Republic and impose severe economic sanctions. The U. S. was not successful, however, in getting the conference to do anything about Cuba.

The San Jose Conference ended with no action taken against communist Cuba; but, under U. S. leadership, it had ruined Trujillo, our only strong anti-communist friend in the Caribbean area.[5]

On August 26, 1960, the United States broke diplomatic relations with the Dominican Republic;[5] and Trujillo's days were numbered.

Our State Department and Central Intelligence Agency have been accused of plotting his murder. Note the following from *Trujillo: The Last Caesar*:

"Norman Gall . . . in his *New Republic* account of 'How Trujillo Died' . . . . says:

" 'The assassination of the Dominican Republic's Rafael L. Trujillo was carried out with assistance from the U. S. Central Intelligence Agency. Arms for . . . slaying . . . the 69-year-old dictator . . . were smuggled by CIA into the country at the request of the assassins, according to highly qualified sources I interviewed in Santo Domingo shortly after the collapse of the Trujillo rule.

" 'The CIA began shipping guns to the Dominican Republic in late 1960 . . . .

" 'The key link between the assassins and the CIA in the arms shipment was a long-time American civilian resident of Ciudad Trujillo . . . who operated a supermarket in a fashionable neighborhood where Trujillo also lived . . . .

" 'The weapons were imported in small parts, to be assembled later by the plotters, among the routine grocery shipments for the supermarket arriving regularly in the capital's port . . . .'

"The arrival of weapons *from the Government of the United States* was, for the plotters, tangible evidence that the might of the United States was behind them. Without that support there would simply have been no conspiracy. Trujillo had put together a powerful political-military machine which could only have been destroyed by intervention from the outside world. And the State Department had decreed: Trujillo must go . . . . [But] . . . . his magnetic appeal to the masses was still overwhelming . . . .

"So there was only one way to get rid of the man . . . . he had to die. The plot began to take shape in the fall of 1960, shortly after the condemnation of the Trujillo regime at the Organization of American States conference in Costa Rica.

"Masterminding the operation were two rather improbable conspirators. They were foreign service officers who had held posts in the U. S. Embassy until the rupture of relations, after which they had been transferred to the U. S. Consulate. The pair reminded me of the American comic strip characters Mutt and Jeff . . . .

"It was typical that Trujillo would always be the last to admit that U. S. diplomats were knifing him in the back.

"It was this same blind confidence that permitted the conspiracy to flower literally under his nose. Trujillo knew that Mutt and Jeff were in contact with oppositionists. It was fairly common knowledge in the government that the American's market was being used as a rendezvous by the two diplomats and oppositionists. But he and the diplomats were Americans. And Trujillo, always the ex-Marine, liked Americans . . . .

"By early December, 1960, the conspiracy had shaped up . . . . On Christmas Day, 1960, the green light was flashed [from Washington] . . . . Tactical execution of the plot was the next step."[1]

Trujillo died in a hail of machine gun bullets, on a lonely stretch of highway near Santo Domingo, the night of May 30, 1961; and anarchy returned to the land that Columbus loved best. Dominicans (presently about 85% negro and mulatto; 15% white) have never known freedom, or shown themselves capable of it.

Sequel

Joaquin Balaguer was President of the Dominican Republic when Trujillo was assassinated. He

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and members of Trujillo's family continued governing the country; but riots, demonstrations, and strikes created grave problems and indicated that a major revolt was impending. By mid-December, 1961, most of the Trujillo family had left the country. Balaguer formed a new government, promising to resign as President as soon as the O. A. S. lifted economic sanctions. President John F. Kennedy announced that he would personally urge lifting of sanctions on the basis of Balaguer's promise.[6]

On January 4, 1962, the O. A. S. lifted economic sanctions. Two days later, the U. S. resumed diplomatic relations and economic aid.

Elections were held in December, 1962; and Juan Bosch was elected President. Bosch, who had been in exile for a quarter of a century, was well known for involvement in leftist activities in Latin America and was reported to have been a communist.[7]

On January 10, 1963, Bosch visited President Kennedy in Washington. On February 27, 1963, Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson attended Bosch's inauguration in Santo Domingo. Johnson pledged U. S. support to Bosch, saying:

"We celebrate with you the rebirth of an authentic democracy."[8]

Bosch permitted communists to return from exile, and took communists into his government. He demanded a "reform act" authorizing him to confiscate property of almost anyone who had done business during the Trujillo regime. He extended government control over education. He tried to force all labor unions into a government-controlled central federation. He closed down several newspapers and broadcast stations for criticizing his regime. He attempted to take over the nation's judiciary. He replaced experienced governmental officials with his leftist political cronies.[9]

All the while, the Kennedy-Johnson administration rushed economic aid, to make the Dominican Republic, under Bosch's presidency, a "showcase of democracy." Despite the aid, the Dominican economy sank into ruin. Poverty and unrest were more prevalent than at any time during the 30-year Trujillo era.[9]

On September 24, 1963, Dominican military leaders, seeing the country rapidly becoming a communist satellite, seized power. Bosch took refuge in Puerto Rico, a U. S. territorial possession; and the U. S. again suspended diplomatic relations with the Dominican Republic. After the anti-communist military junta had surrendered control to a "moderate" civilian junta, President Johnson (on December 14, 1963) renewed diplomatic relations.

On April 24, 1965, supporters of Juan Bosch rebelled against the civilian junta. On April 28, 1965, President Johnson ordered Marines into the Dominican Republic to evacuate Americans and other foreigners. The French government ordered two warships to evacuate French citizens.[10]

On April 29, Johnson administration spokesmen denied reports that the President was acting with force because of communist involvement in the rebellion.[11] The O. A. S. (at a special meeting which President Johnson had requested) sanctioned U. S. rescue operations. When Dominican military leaders, who were trying to suppress the rebellion, asked the U. S. to expand its rescue operations to help restore order, the U. S. said that this could not be done without O. A. S. approval — that we could act only to protect U. S. citizens and property.[12]

On May 1, another special O. A. S. meeting was called, to consider President Johnson's request that the O. A. S. take responsibility for restoring order.

On May 2, President Johnson said that the revolt had been taken over by communists and that the U. S. purpose was no longer merely to protect U. S. lives and property, but to prevent establishment of another communist government in the Western Hemisphere. This May 2 speech made it

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clear (as Walter Lippmann pointed out) that President Johnson wanted restoration of "the kind of popular democratic revolution, committed to democracy and social justice, which . . . [Juan] Bosch represents."[13]

On May 6, 1965, the O. A. S. voted to create an inter-American military force to restore order in the Dominican Republic. President Johnson had promised to withdraw American troops as soon as an O. A. S. force was ready to take over. The O. A. S. action and the President's promise do not mean that our soldiers will be withdrawn. It means that they will serve under O. A. S., rather than under U. S., command.

By May 8, 1965, about 19,000 U. S. troops were in the Dominican Republic (another 11,000 in supporting naval forces). Thirteen had been killed, 75 wounded.

President Johnson insists that communists took over a "popular revolt" in the Dominican Republic. Facts, however, attest that communists planned the revolt; and that one leader in the communist plot was Juan Bosch,[14] the man whom Kennedy-Johnson policies helped to power in 1963; the man on whom Kennedy and Johnson lavished praise and aid; the man whose socialist dictatorship President Johnson apparently wants re-established in the Dominican Republic.

We and Dominicans would have been infinitely better off if we had left them and their pro-American dictator alone to manage their own affairs. But Eisenhower-Kennedy-Johnson political intervention helped create conditions which made our military intervention necessary.

Once intervention was ordered, it should have been robust and unlimited. Instead, our troops were initially handicapped by restrictions to keep them from appearing aggressive. They could not shoot unless shot at first. They were permitted to use only "hand-held weapons" — forbidden to use heavy weapons or tanks. They could not blow up houses filled with snipers who were killing them.[15]

When our troops are ordered to battle, they should be permitted to use their most effective weapons and tactics. They should fight as United States soldiers, for clearly-defined United States objectives. Giving an international organization *any* control over the mission or tactics of our fighting men will cost us blood and treasure. It will prevent quick, decisive action. It will prohibit concentration on promoting *United States* interests. It could eventuate in a situation far worse than the one which prompted our intervention in the first place.

* * * * *

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Born in Missouri, reared in Texas, Dan Smoot went to SMU getting BA and MA degrees, 1938 and 1940. In 1941, he joined the faculty at Harvard as a Teaching Fellow, doing graduate work for a doctorate in American civilization. From 1942 to 1951, he was an FBI agent: three and a half years on communist investigations; two years on FBI headquarters staff; almost four years on general FBI cases in various places. He resigned from the FBI and, from 1951 to 1955, was commentator on national radio and television programs, giving *both* sides of controversial issues. In July, 1955, he started his present profit-supported, free-enterprise business: publishing *The Dan Smoot Report,* a weekly magazine available by subscription; and producing a weekly news-analysis radio and television broadcast, available for sponsorship by reputable business firms, as an advertising vehicle. The *Report* and broadcast give *one* side of important issues: the side that presents documented truth using the American Constitution as a yardstick. If you think Smoot's materials are effective against socialism and communism, you can help immensely—help get subcribers for the *Report,* commercial sponsors for the broadcast.

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FOOTNOTES

(1) *Trujillo: The Last Caesar,* by General Arturo Espaillat, Henry Regnery Co., Chicago, 1963, 192 pp., price: $4.95

(2) Special to the Times from Washington, *The New York Times,* July 14, 1960, pp. 1, 10

(3) Special to the Times from Washington, by John W. Finney, *The New York Times,* July 30, 1960, p. 4

(4) For information on Betancourt's communist record, see material by U. S. Representative John H. Rousselot (Rep., Calif.) in *Congressional Records,* September 23, 1961 (pp. 19674-9), February 26, 1962 (pp. 2703-7), July 11, 1962 (pp. 12288-94), daily editions; U. S. Representative William C. Cramer (Rep., Fla.), *Congressional Records,* October 13, 1962 (pp. A7702-3), and February 7, 1963 (pp. 1870-2), daily editions; U. S. Representative Henry C. Schadeberg (Rep., Wisc.), *Congressional Record,* February 18, 1963, pp. 2335-6 (daily); U. S. Representative John M. Ashbrook (Rep., Ohio), *Congressional Record,* February 21, 1963, pp. 2548-9 (daily); U. S. Representative R. Walter Riehlman (Rep., N. Y.), *Congressional Record,* February 25, 1963, pp. 2810-3 (daily).

(5) UPI story from Washington, *The Dallas Morning News,* August 27, 1960

(6) Special to the News from Santo Domingo, by Thayer Waldo, *The Dallas Morning News,* December 18, 1961, p. 9

(7) "Washington Whispers," *U. S. News & World Report,* April 22, 1963, p. 19

(8) AP from Santo Domingo, *The Dallas Times Herald,* February 27, 1963, p. 6A

(9) "Bosch: A Man of Controversy," by Ken Thompson, *The Dallas Morning News,* May 8, 1965, Sec. 4, p. 2

(10) AP story from Washington, *The Dallas Times Herald,* April 29, 1965, pp. 1A, 17A

(11) AP story by John Hightower, *The Dallas Morning News,* April 30, 1965, Sec. 1, p. 15

(12) AP story from Santo Domingo, *The Dallas Times Herald,* April 30, 1965, pp. 1A, 17A

(13) Walter Lippmann column, *The Dallas Morning News,* May 6, 1965, Sec. 2, p. 8

(14) "Full Story of Caribbean War: How Reds Plotted a Take-Over," *U. S. News & World Report,* May 10, 1965, pp. 32-5

(15) *U. S. News & World Report,* May 17, 1965, p. 34

(16) For a general history of the Dominican Republic through 1960, see *Encyclopedia Americana,* Volume IX, 1961 edition, pp. 243-247b.

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